

years Polish language classes were a standard part of the school's curriculum. Through the work of current pastor, Rev. Michael Ignaszak, and many others at St. Helen's parish, that emphasis on our Polish culture and traditions continues to flourish.

St. Helen's is known throughout its neighborhood as not just a Catholic parish and parochial school, but as an outstanding member of the community. Since 1972 St. Helen's church festival has been a highly anticipated annual event. Its monthly fish fries, run entirely by volunteers, have become a Friday night tradition.

However, St. Helen's community involvement runs far deeper than fish fries and church festivals. It has been home to Boy Scout Pack 264 since 1949. Many clubs, such as the 55 & Over Club and the Christian Women's Group volunteer their time and efforts to numerous community causes. The Human Concerns Committee works closely with the Interfaith Caregiving Network to distribute holiday gifts to the elderly and home bound in the area.

And so it is with great pleasure that I join students and parishioners, past and present, in congratulating St. Helen's on the celebration of its first 75 years, with best wishes for the next 75, and beyond.

OSHA AWARD FOR NATIONAL ENZYME

HON. ROY BLUNT

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 20, 2000

Mr. BLUNT. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to publicly congratulate the administrative staff and employees of National Enzyme Company in Forsyth, Missouri for their outstanding vision, dedication and effort in attaining Merit Status in OSHA's Voluntary Protection Program. This honor is conferred on less than 1% of the six million companies overseen nationwide by the Occupational Safety and Health Administration.

The manufacturer of private label enzyme-based dietary supplements located in Missouri's Seventh Congressional District joins over 400 other businesses in our nation in participation in this program. They are only the seventh company in the state of Missouri to achieve this designation.

The award was granted after an intensive 9 month-self study by employees at all levels followed by a rigorous comprehensive review visit by OSHA inspectors who found the facility to be fully in compliance with all regulations.

According to OSHA this designation means that the health and safety practices and procedures developed by National Enzyme are models within their industry, and that the facility is preparing itself for even higher levels of health and safety compliance. In fact those inspectors noted that the program has "evolved into a comprehensive process that is an integral part of everyone's daily working procedures, which extends to all levels of the organization."

I would also point out that this outstanding achievement is the result of a cooperative effort between public and private entities rather than a unilateral regulatory effort on the part of a lone federal agency. To quote OSHA "This

concept recognizes that compliance enforcement alone can never fully achieve the objectives of the Occupational Safety and Health Act. Good safety management programs that go beyond OSHA standards can protect workers more effectively than simple compliance."

National Enzyme's commitment to an ongoing program of employee safety is demonstrated by their first place award last year from the four-state Safety Council of the Ozarks for Most Effective Safety Committee.

I express my appreciation, and that of all my colleagues, to President Anthony Collier, and Manufacturing Manager Jerry Holvick for their leadership in bringing this national recognition to Forsyth, Missouri and the Seventh Congressional District.

TRANSFER OF VA FACILITY TO CUSTER COUNTY, MONTANA

HON. RICK HILL

OF MONTANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 20, 2000

Mr. HILL of Montana. Mr. Speaker, I am proud to introduce this legislation in the House. An identical version, S. 2637, has been introduced in the Senate by Senators BURNS and BAUCUS of Montana. The intent of the bill is quite simple: to transfer ownership of the Veterans Hospital from the VA to Custer County, Montana. For many years, this hospital operated at full capacity to serve Montana veterans. Then, it was downgraded to a clinic. The result of this change is that the VA only uses a small part of this very large facility. Still, the VA is in charge of upkeep and maintenance of the entire structure. Until recently, there were about 100 employees and only one doctor working for area veterans. The VA estimates that this situation is costing \$500,000 per year which would be much better spent taking care of veterans rather than a building the VA no longer needs.

This situation is not unique to the VA in Miles City. It is estimated that the VA spends \$1 million dollars every day on excess properties around this country. At a time when budgets are tight and when we are having a difficult time honoring the commitments this country made to our veterans, the current situation is simply unacceptable.

What is a liability to the Veterans Administration can be an asset to the town of Miles City and Custer County. In a town of some 8,000 people, the change in the VA mission has cost the economy 145 full-time quality jobs with a \$7 million decline in payroll in just the last 6 years. For a town whose top two industries are agriculture and government jobs, that's a significant loss. The community could have, understandably, objected to the mission change. Instead, community leaders have banded together and devised a plan that works for the town, the VA and our veterans.

The community's main objective for the transfer is long-term economic development which includes: relocation of distance learning technology to a tech center site in the VA complex, development of a multi-purpose day care, work force training site, career development site, food bank distribution site, and potential office space to be rented for start-up business opportunities.

Community colleges traditionally have been recognized as key to sustainable economic

development through the training opportunities they offer. MCC is located across the street from the VA hospital. Their curriculum will benefit greatly with steady access to this facility. MCC will train individuals for today's job market, including training for tech jobs that would be included in the tech center.

The \$500,000 savings achieved annually through this transfer will be used for new outpatient clinics in rural Montana. That represents a significant benefit to our veterans who currently have to travel extraordinary distances to access the care promised them. In rural states like Montana, accessibility to health care is a very real problem and another reason that this legislation makes so much sense.

The alternative to legislative action to transfer the property is a long, laborious bureaucratic process that involves several federal agencies and that can take years to complete. That process can cost several million dollars, not to mention the continuing expense of the VA maintaining the excess property. Our approach will expedite the process, saving the VA money for veterans and, at the same time, jump-starting economic development for a town in serious trouble.

HONORING MRS. ADRIANA G. FIGUEROA OF SAN GABRIEL, CALIFORNIA, CELEBRATING HER RETIREMENT FROM 37 YEARS OF TEACHING

HON. MATTHEW G. MARTINEZ

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 20, 2000

Mr. MARTINEZ. Mr. Speaker, today I convey my heartfelt congratulations to Mrs. Adriana Figueroa on her retirement. Mrs. Figueroa has dedicated the last 37 years of her life to our community as a public educator, and has exemplified the best in public service.

Mrs. Figueroa was born on March 2, 1940 in Los Angeles, California, and was raised in East Los Angeles. She attended St. Alphonsus Elementary School in Los Angeles and Sacred Heart of Mary High School in Montebello. She graduated from California State University, Los Angeles with a Bachelor of Arts Degree in English and Social Sciences, and after graduation, completed course work for a General Secondary California State Teaching Credential. She received her Masters in Education from Azusa Pacific University.

Her admirable career began at Alhambra High School in 1963 as a classroom English teacher teaching ninth, tenth, and eleventh grade students. In 1974, she accepted a position as an Adult Basic Educator (ABE) with the Los Angeles Unified School District, teaching adults to read and write. That decision changed the direction of her career, and from that moment forward, she would make a difference by bringing literacy, high school diplomas, and vocational training to adults who were in need.

After receiving her administrative credential in 1979, Mrs. Figueroa was named the site Coordinator for the Mid City ABE center, a branch of Belmont Adult School in downtown Los Angeles.

In 1986, it was our good fortune that she was brought to Baldwin Park to impact the